

FEBRUARY 15, 1952



THE NATIONAL Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE U. S.

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I Am A Mugwump

By MRS. EUGENE DUFFIELD, member League of Women Voters of Cincinnati; former president League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia.

I AM a mugwump—one of those awful birds with his mug on one side of the political fence and his wump on the other.

I seldom vote a straight ticket. I gather bits and shreds of information like mad before each election, read all the news items, the polls, the prognosticators. I go to candidates' meetings, listen to radio speeches, read everybody's campaign flyers as if my life depended on it. I never have become a proselytizer for a party though I always consider seriously the question of which party I would prefer to have in power. Occasionally I have reached the point of being a vocal supporter of a candidate, sometimes of one party, sometimes of the other.

I think you'll agree that no party would claim me. I don't have what parties want—unquestioning party loyalty.

The League of Women Voters—God bless it—has made me this way. My eyes are focused on the issues, understanding them and deciding how I stand on them. After that I judge the men and the parties. Since no man or party agrees with me 100 per cent I swing between them looking for the candidates and the party that most nearly agree with me. Occasionally I find the man—but never the party because with so many spokesmen I cannot be sure of a party's stand.

All this does not mean that I do not believe in the two-party system. I do. It is a good mechanism for supplying political personnel. I admire the people who run the machinery and envy my friends who have real loyalty to their parties. It is important that 5 or 10 per cent of the voters be the hard core of party organization; fortunately there will always be people whose particular interests and talents lie in politics.

I doubt that the next 70 per cent count very much—those who always vote with their party. They have no part in the nominating process that goes on among the leaders of the organization. Nor do the leaders have to seek out their opinions. Their votes can be counted on. Once in a long while they may be important in a primary fight when there is a choice of candidates, a situation which party leadership is eager to avoid. For those moments I would vote in the primaries if I qualified and if my state election law did not require me to pledge my vote to the party's slate in the election.

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Down With Mugwumperry

By AUDREY WALZ, co-author with her husband, Jay Walz, of "The Bizarre Sisters"; author of mysteries under the name Francis Bonnamy.

ON the arguments for "independent" voting, I cut my political teeth. My father was an "independent" who generally voted for the most independent Republican: T.R. when he ran on the Bull Moose ticket; LaFollette when he ran as a Progressive, and so on. If no Republican bolted and he strongly disliked the regular party candidate, he occasionally went so far as to vote Democratic. He did nothing, you understand, to see that the Republicans nominated his choice because he wasn't a party man, though he favored the Republicans. He simply waited to see what would be set before him. If it was at all palatable, he swallowed it; if not, he simply helped himself from the next political dish. Because he was handsome, intelligent, and my father, I thought him brave and independent. Now I realize such a course was, and still is, highly irresponsible.

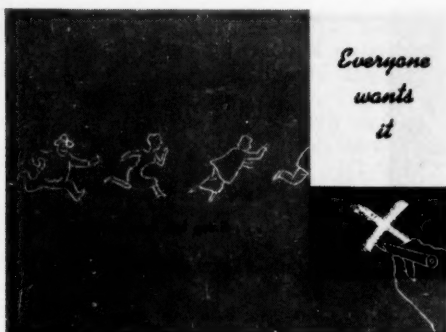
Since the days of my childhood, the number of such irresponsibles has been vastly on the rise. Their effect on our political life has been, I think, almost disastrous. In their ranks are lined up the mouthers of two revealing clichés: Those who say "I never dabble in politics"; and those who announce proudly that they "vote for the man, not the party."

The great numbers of voters in the first group have made it possible, in most localities, for the professional politicians to run our two parties. Time was when they didn't; when the leading citizens in each community served as delegates to the state and national conventions. The Republic was young then, and our government still cherished by those who had made sacrifices to create it. They understood that politics were simply the democratic processes in action and they knew well the axiom that a people get precisely the government they deserve. But now—can any bright girl in the class tell me the names of the delegates her town sent to any party convention recently? I can, but then, I'm not an "independent."

That the modern independent voter puts personality over party has had, I believe, a most adverse effect on our native two-party system. Too many millions vote for a personality not for an administration to be run in clearly defined principles. There the British, voting on a party government, are more realistic. Indeed, still voting "for the man, not the party," American "independents" have in latter years raised up more than one Congress designed to clash head on with the Executive.

(Continued on page 2)

Everyone Wants It (Publication No. 190) Good government, that is. Inside it reads in part: "Government affects your family, your home, your business,



your freedom. . . . Think and then vote." A Voters Service flyer that is not dated. Designed for local, state, and national elections. (Feb. 1952, 100 copies for \$1.50)

A conference to expand knowledge of international economic and social development in underdeveloped areas (popularly known as Point IV) will meet in Washington, April 7-9, under the sponsorship of organizations (including LWV) which have been working together informally toward this goal. Prominent national and international speakers will attend as well as spokesmen from the United Nations, business, agriculture, labor and religious groups. Delegates will participate in workshops. Watch for additional information in a later issue of the VOTER.

I AM A MUGWUMP—Continued from page 1

It's the next 20 per cent who really count, in my judgment. The mugwumps whose votes are being wooed by both parties. It's our votes that win elections.

I have a hunch that we independents have more effect upon the nominations and the platforms than any but a few hundred of the most able men in each party; certainly more than the party member and very certainly more than the League member who goes into her party to reform it.

Do you think the Republican and Democratic committeemen are worrying now about the regular Republican and Democratic votes when they're planning this year's presidential campaign? Aren't they wondering instead what candidates they can put up who will win over us mugwumps?

As a confessed mugwump, I wish the League of Women Voters would stop belittling us.

DOWN WITH MUGWUMPERY—Continued from page 1

With the advent of TV, the impact of personality on the voting public will be enormously increased. The boys in the smoke-filled rooms will take to thinking like Hollywood casting directors. It's a trend that may go hard with short blond men of whatever brainpower. They don't video as effectively as tall brunettes.

As our two parties have receded in importance with the increase in numbers of "independents," so have their tenets tended to merge. If you don't think so,

UNESCO Conference

HOW a larger proportion of the population can attain a greater understanding of world affairs was discussed in New York recently by 2400 of the nation's foremost community leaders, educators, scientists, artists, and public relations experts attending the United States National Commission for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

Meeting in small discussion groups in which all felt free to participate, delegates analyzed the effectiveness of the interpretation job on world affairs being done in local communities. The failure of many organizations to reach a broad cross-section of the population was readily admitted. Public opinion specialists felt a more individual approach was needed to reach the "man in the street" together with greater use of proved mass publicity techniques (radio, television, and the press).

Good discussions, able speakers, and new and renewed acquaintance with others interested in bringing an understanding of world affairs to the individual citizen, inspired delegates to strive in a practical way to do a more effective interpretation job when they returned home.

Get Your March Issue of McCall's

You will find a picture story of the Ann Arbor League's celebration for those new voters who "Became 21 in '51." McCall's survey shows that only half of the new crop of voters plan to go to the polls. Read too on page 112 "A Few Pointers for New Voters" suggested by LWV. On sale February 20.

try explaining the difference between a Democrat and a Republican to one of your English friends.

Nevertheless, thousands of my conviction in both parties have refused to give up. They have made an honest party affiliation and work at it. Not for them the easy stroll to the voting booth on election day. Between elections they work steadily—helping more and more of their neighbors to register, stimulating in all ways their interest in voting. As election time approaches, they must take a hand in persuading candidates of character to face first the primary and then the general election. (I'm trying right now to persuade an outstanding member of the League and a young, social-minded minister to enter our councilmanic primary.) The best persuasion to offer anyone is solid political support. Each worker in a party must build up a following of people who believe in his judgment and integrity and will, to some degree, be influenced by his opinions. As the primary approaches, they and every other voter in the neighborhood, must be canvassed. A worker talks on doorsteps and the telephone until he's hoarse, and then goes down to headquarters to help get out a mailing.

The chill dawn of primary day finds the real worker already at the polls, well behind the chalked line, on the job of giving voters a last minute reminder of the cause in hand. Late that night, he's serving as a poll watcher, alert to spot the sleight-of-hand tricks of the professionals. Exhausted, a party worker finally tumbles into bed, knowing full well only one job has been done. A worse one at the general election is still ahead, and November dawns are colder. It's not easy, but you'll never feel more American in your life.

Hard Choices

THE proposed federal budget for 1952-53 (July 1-June 30) presents the Congress and the American people with some difficult choices. Almost everyone agrees that we *don't* want higher taxes, that we *do* want an adequate defense program, that we *don't* want a budget deficit. The problem before us is how to reconcile these desires, or if they cannot be reconciled, how to choose the least of the evils.

Even the most optimistic and economy-minded see little possibility of a balanced budget in 1953 on the basis of the present tax laws. Some in fact forecast a very large deficit. Rather than take the chance of the latter, then, should tax revenues be increased? The dangers of too heavy taxes are argued on the one hand and the inflationary effects of a deficit on the other.

The question of how heavy a burden of taxation the American economy can stand is one commonly debated. Usually the discussion centers on the unpleasant effects of taxation and little attention is given to an analysis of what the question really means.

Economic Limits of Taxation

Dr. Kimmel of the Brookings Institution has defined the economic limits of taxation in this way: "The limits of taxable capacity would be plainly exceeded if the level and forms of taxation should so restrict economic incentives and productive effort as to bring about sharply lower levels of business activity and national income."^{*}

In a country characterized by private enterprise, we depend upon the desire to gain more income for increased production and for directing production in the lines where it is most wanted. The government *can* tax away such a large share of profits from the business man that he will not think it is worth while to start new and risky enterprises, experiment with improved methods or exert every effort to improve efficiency. He may spend more energy in trying to diminish his tax liability than in increasing output. It *can* take so much from the salaried man that he will not strive for promotion, that it will be difficult to fill positions of great responsibility. It *can* take so much from the wage earner that he finds it preferable to take an extra day off a week rather than work overtime. It *can* take so much from poorer groups that they suffer in health and energy and their productivity declines. Are these things happening in the United States?

Whether they happen depends not only upon the total amount raised by taxation, but on the kinds of

taxes, the way they are shifted, the rate of progression etc. It depends, too, on the existence of other than money incentives. When people are convinced of the necessity of sacrifice for survival, a tax system may work well which would be a failure under other circumstances. So we distinguish between what is possible in war time and what is possible in peacetime. We might well ask: "What kind of psychology prevails during a cold war?"

These are some of the points to be considered in trying to answer the question whether at this time we have reached the economic limit of taxation, whether the economy can stand any more. The question cannot be answered decisively by statistics. What we do know, however, is that the gross national product** has been increasing at a rapid rate under high levels of taxation. Even allowing for inflated prices, it was 8 per cent higher in 1951 than in 1950.



Can the Old Dome Stand the Strain?

Tax Inequities

Yet nearly everyone can cite cases where a tax has worked badly not only from the point of view of the individual, but of society. Moreover, it is undoubtedly true that the higher the general level of taxation the more frequent are the severe cases of inequities and social disadvantages. Recommendations have been made to Congress which are designed to erase some of the inequities, to close some of the loopholes of the existing tax laws. The attempt is primarily to prevent undue allowance for depreciation and other costs in figuring taxable income. Opponents of the proposed changes say that some of these so-called "loopholes"

are incentives to take risks; advocates of them that they are only incentives to waste.

How do the economic dangers of heavier taxation stand up if the alternative is a Treasury deficit? How do the inequities of an imperfect and heavy tax system compare with the inequities of a sharply rising price level? The inflation which accelerated immediately after Korea has been checked in 1951. One thing that helped check it was the higher rate of taxation passed by the last Congress. What is feared is a resumption of inflation if the huge military expenditures of 1953 are met by an expansion of government borrowing. In spite of the fact that in an election year there is little hope of a dispassionate consideration of the issue, the economic problem is there to be faced.

^{*} Lewis H. Kimmel: *Taxes and Economic Incentives*. Published by Brookings Institution, 1950.

^{**} The value of the output of the nation's goods and services.

Status Quo Maintained In United Nations Membership

ON February 6 the Security Council, meeting in Paris, turned down the applications of fourteen nations who sought admission to the United Nations. Most of the applying countries have been asking for membership for a number of years.

The United States, believing that each applying country should be considered on its own merits in the light of the membership provision of the Charter, refused in the words of U. S. delegate Ernest Gross to "horsetrade" with Russia who backed an "en bloc" system of entry to the U.N. The U.S.S.R. particularly wanted to see membership granted to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Outer Mongolia and Rumania. If the Security Council had been willing to admit the Soviet-sponsored bloc, Russia in turn was willing to admit Austria, Ceylon, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Jordan, Libya, Nepal and Portugal at the same time. Six members of the Security Council opposed Russia's proposal; Pakistan joined the U.S.S.R. in an affirmative vote; Britain, France and Chile abstained.

Although the fourteen nations were denied admission to the United Nations, they are not ineligible to join in the work of the specialized agencies. Many of the fourteen are already responsible and hard-working members of such agencies as UNESCO, Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Labor Office.

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . . Since the U.N. Charter was adopted in 1945, twenty-two countries extended full or less limited suffrage to women? Women still have no political rights in fifteen countries.

★ CONGRESSIONAL SPOTLIGHT ★

D. C. Home Rule (S. 1976)*: A House District of Columbia Subcommittee now plans to study and hold "brief hearings" on the home rule bill passed by the Senate.

Reorganization Plan No. 1: By rejecting a bill disapproving the President's plan for reorganization of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the House has gone on record as approving the plan. The Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments is continuing its hearings on this subject.

Trade Restrictions (S. 2104): This bill would repeal Section 104 of the Defense Production Act which restricts imports of fats, oils, peanuts, rice, and dairy products. By a vote of 47 yeas to 39 nays, the Senate on January 30 sent this bill back to the Senate Banking and Currency Committee with instructions to reconsider its favorable action "in the light of present conditions" and to report back to the Senate not later than March 3.

Trade Restrictions (H. R. 5693): On February 7, the Senate Finance Committee concluded hearings on the bill levying a tariff on imports of fresh and frozen tuna fish. This bill was passed by the House last session.

North Atlantic Treaty: On February 7 the Senate by a vote of 73 yeas to 2 nays readopted the resolution of ratification of the protocol to the North Atlantic

Presidential Primaries

ONLY fifteen of the forty-eight states give their citizens the opportunity to voice their preference for nominees for President and Vice President by means of a "Presidential preferential primary." Although this system is by no means perfect, many believe it offers the best means for the ordinary citizen to make his preference known. This year, with excitement already running high over the selection of candidates for the Presidency, there has been renewed interest in a nation-wide primary for that purpose.

Legislation on the subject has been introduced in both House and Senate. Senate Bill 2570, introduced by a bi-partisan group of Senators, would authorize the Attorney General to set up agreements with the states to hold nation-wide Presidential primaries. Each candidate would be required to: (1) file a petition signed by at least five hundred qualified voters in each of thirty-six states; (2) represent a political party which polled a popular vote of more than ten million in the last Presidential election; (3) withdraw his or her name within ten days after notification by the Attorney General if he or she did not desire to run. An appropriation of \$10 million in each Presidential election year is authorized to compensate states for use of their facilities and services, up to a maximum of twenty cents for each vote cast.

In the House, Representative Bennett has proposed a Constitutional amendment (H.J. Res. 366) to authorize a national Presidential primary. Each state would have nominating votes equal in number to its representation in Congress. These votes would be split in each state according to the popular vote received by the candidates in the Presidential primaries. The person having a nation-wide majority of votes cast by his party would be its nominee for President.

Treaty which would allow Greece and Turkey to become members.

Defense Production Act: Senator Maybank, chairman of the Senate Committee which will hold hearings on the extension of the Defense Production Act, on February 5 introduced S. 2594 to extend the Act just as it is for one year. The Administration had previously announced a desire for a considerably tightened-up two-year bill. Hearings start March 4.

Voting Commission (H. R. 6164): This bill sets up a bi-partisan commission to determine why so many eligible voters fail to vote, and to make recommendations for remedying the situation. The Commission would be patterned after the Hoover Commission and would be called on to make a final report within ten days after the 83rd Congress is convened.

* Indicates League support.

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MRS. JOHN G. LEE, President
MRS. ALEXANDER GUYOL, Editor

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